

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 1637

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TAGS: PEPR, PDIP, ML, US
SUBJ: RECALL OF MALIAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON

1. SUMMARY. THE GOVERNMENT OF MALI IS RECALLING ITS AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES FOR SUSPECTED INVOLVEMENT IN THE RECENT ABORTIVE COUP D'ETAT AGAINST PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE. IT WISHES WASHINGTON TO KNOW THAT THE MOVE HAS NOTHING WHATEVER TO DO WITH RELATIONS BETWEEN MALI AND THE UNITED STATES. AGREEMENT FOR A NEW AMBASSADOR WILL BE REQUESTED, BUT PROBABLY NOT FOR SOME TIME. END SUMMARY.

2. SEYDOU TRAORE, SECRETARY GENERAL, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CALLED ME IN ON APRIL 5 TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION CONCERNING IBRAHIMA SIMA, MALI'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID SIMA HAD BEEN SUMMONED FROM WASHINGTON AND HAD ARRIVED IN BAMA KO ABOUT 10 DAYS AGO. SINCE SUCH MOVES SOMETIMES GAVE RISE TO MISINTERPRETATIONS, TRAORE WISHED TO ASSURE ME AND MY GOVERNMENT THAT SIMA'S RETURN HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MALI, WHICH WERE GOOD.

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3. ACTUALLY, THE SECRETARY GENERAL SAID, SIMA WAS BROUGHT BACK FOR SUSPECTED COMPLICITY IN THE DOUKARABAGAYOKO PLANNED COUP THAT PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE HAD PRE-EMPTED BY THE ARRESTS OF FEBRUARY 18. SIMA WAS CURRENTLY "AT THE DISPOSITION OF " THE NATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY. NOW, BECAUSE THE INVESTIGATION WAS LIKELY TO GO ON FOR SOME TIME AND BECAUSE IT WAS CONSIDERED IN-

APPROPRIATE TO LEAVE THE MATTER HANGING, THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED TO RECALL HIM. FURTHER, EVEN IF SIMA CAME OUT CLEAN, HIS STANDING IN THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY WOULD HAVE BEEN AFFECTED, SO THAT THE MALIAN GOVERNMENT THOUGHT IT BETTER IN ANY EVENT TO START AFRESH. AGREEMENT FOR A NEW AMBASSADOR WOULD EVENTUALLY BE REQUESTED, BUT PROBABLY NOT VERY SOON BECAUSE PRESIDENT TRAORE WAS MOVING EXTREMELY CAREFULLY IN THE REORGANIZATION OF THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS NECESSITATED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. MEANWHILE, COUNSELOR DIAW WOULD BE IN CHARGE. SEYDOU TRAORE AGAIN WISHED TO ASSURE US THAT THE AFFAIR WAS STRICTLY AN INTERNAL ONE AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING.

4. I THANKED THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR THE FOREGOING EXPLANATION AND ADDED THAT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY FOR I HAD NO DESIRE TO INTERFERE IN MALI'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, IT WAS REALLY TOO BAD BECAUSE SIMA HAD BEEN A MOST EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. THE SECRETARY GENERAL AGREED AND THEN EXPLAINED THAT HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE SURPRISED, THAT HE HAD NEVER EXPECTED IT. SIMA WAS A MEMBER OF THE POLICE, HAD BEEN ON GOOD TERMS WITH PRESIDENT TRAORE, WAS INTELLIGENT, AND WAS VERY EFFECTIVE AS AMBASSADOR. THEREFORE WHEN HE HAD COME BACK TO BAMAKO, THE SECRETARY GENERAL THOUGHT IT WAS PERHAPS TO BE OFFERED A HIGH POST, SUCH AS DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL SECURITY
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(TIECORO BAGAYOKO'S OLD JOB). HE HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ASTONISHED TO LEARN THE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT REASON FOR HIS RETURN. TRAORE COMMENTED, THOUGH, THAT THERE MUST BE SOME GROUND FOR THE INVESTIGATION IF THE PRESIDENT WAS READY TO SIGN A LETTER OF RECALL.

5. THE CONVERSATION TURNED TO THE GENERAL SITUATION IN MALI, AND I SAID THAT, AGAIN SPEAKING PERSONALLY AND INFORMALLY, I HOPED THAT A WAY WOULD SOON BE FOUND FOR A TAPERING-OFF OF THE ARRESTS AND PROBES, FOR RECONCILIATION, AND FOR A RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE. SEYDOU TRAORE HEARTILY AGREED. HE REMARKED THAT IF DOUKARA AND BAGAYOKO HAD SUCCEEDED IN THEIR PLAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY BAD FOR MALIANS AND SO IT WAS NATURAL THAT ONE WOULD GO AFTER THE CULPRITS. BUT HE THOUGHT A RETURN TO NORMAL WOULD COME, AND HE POINTED TO THE EXISTENCE OF AN UNPUBLICIZED COMMISSION THAT WAS WORKING ON ITS OWN TRACK, IN PARALLEL WITH THE MUCH-PUBLICIZED NATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY, TO REGULARIZE GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS.

6. IN A BRIEF SEPARATE TALK ON APRIL 5 WITH LIEUTENANT-

COLONEL YOUSOUF TRAORE, MEMBER OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE
AND ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOLLOWING THE
SIGNING OF A FOOD AID AGREEMENT, HE COMMENTED THAT THINGS
WERE BEGINNING TO SETTLE DOWN AND THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE NEW PARTY INSTITUTIONS WAS MOVING RIGHT ALONG.

7. WE SHALL SEE.
BYRNE

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